

Fast Facts

From Dr. Katz



"To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners."

February 9, 2012



Message from the Director

Extending Ourselves

This issue of Fast Facts is filled with examples of how DHS—the people and the system—are extending themselves. Particularly dear to my heart is the story of how administrators within DHS are contributing in a direct way to our patient care. As you will read, Beryl Brooks, Harry Furuya, Carla Nino and other administrators throughout the Ambulatory Care Network are extending themselves to work beyond their administrative responsibilities to answer phones, interact with patients, eliminate back-logs in medical records, and do whatever is necessary to increase our ability to care for those who need us.

We have also extended ourselves in a major way to increase primary care access. By streamlining administrative processes and redirecting resources from episodic urgent care to longitudinal primary care, we have created an additional 43,680 appointments on a yearly basis. That is not a misprint: 43,680 appointments, the equivalent of two new health centers without hiring any additional staff. We are demonstrating that in a time of recession, when the County has less money, but the needs of our patients have increased due to unemployment and its accompanying loss of employment-based insurance, we are extending our reach.

In a much more "concrete" way, the new High Desert Multi-service Ambulatory Care Center will extend our reach. It will have more exam rooms, better equipment, and is located in a more central accessible location for our patients. We are so grateful to Supervisor Antonovich who championed this project. So my challenge to all of us is to look for ways that we can extend ourselves, and not just at work. It is equally important to look for ways to extend ourselves in how we care for our children, our parents, our friends and our neighbors.

High Desert MACC Construction Begins

Contributed by Michael Wilson

Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich joined Health Services director Dr. Mitchell Katz and civic leaders on January 30 to break ground on the replacement High Desert Multi-Service Ambulatory Care Center. The two-story, 142,000 square foot clinic will provide primary care, specialty clinics, diagnostic and treatment services, and outpatient surgery.

"The current High Desert MACC is located on the outskirts of Lancaster," said DHS administrator Beryl Brooks. "Because the new site is located in central Lancaster, it will improve patient experience and operating efficiency by consolidating services within one building."

The new facility will have the capacity to provide up to 125,000 patient visits each year with 20 more exam rooms than the existing clinic. Primary care medical homes will be provided in the Adult Internal Medicine clinic, Pediatrics Clinic and Women's clinic with a focus on preventive health and chronic disease management. The site will also house an urgent care clinic and co-located mental health services.

"The new MACC will be an important pillar of the DHS health system and an important source of care for the local community," added DHS Ambulatory Care Network chief executive officer Dr. Alexander Li. "Care will be more patient-centered, ensuring a positive experience." The new clinic will provide a range of diagnostic and treatment services with the addition of an ambulatory surgical center. The clinic will feature wireless connectivity of medical devices, filmless imaging, and other new technologies. Health officials expect the clinic to open in mid-2014.



Supervisor Antonovich and Dr. Katz

DHS Boosts Primary Care Slots

Contributed by Michael Wilson

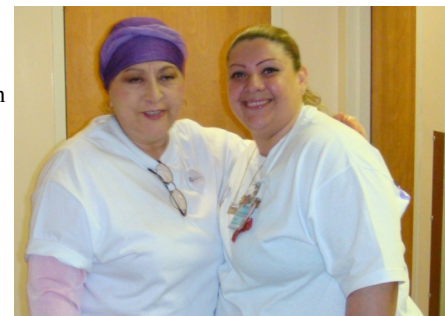
An additional 70 primary care sessions a week have been added at Ambulatory Care Network (ACN) clinics without hiring more staff. ACN chief medical officer Dr. Nina Park said the feat was accomplished by reassigning urgent care/walk-in providers into primary care and decreasing administrative tasks for providers.

"We have capacity in our system," says Park. "The challenge is to rethink staffing and responsibilities to open up more sessions. That work is difficult, but it can be achieved by moving beyond entrenched thinking and finding solutions."

El Monte Comprehensive Health Center medical director Dr. Stanley Leong moved two physicians from the walk-in clinic to the scheduled adult clinic, opening up nine additional sessions each week or 90 patient visits. A total of 223 sessions (2,000 more patients) have been able to schedule a primary care appointment as a result of staffing changes.

There are now a total of 14 teams for adult primary care at El Monte, which has reduced episodic (walk in) care by moving patients into coordinated medical homes as capacity is expanded. El Monte also anticipates short-notice patient visits by maintaining one appointment slot each hour for patients who need to see a provider in less than 48 hours.

The expanded capacity means greater access, improved efficiency, better patient experience and better health outcomes. Each primary care session encompasses between 8 to 12 visits, meaning providers can treat an additional 43,680 patient visits per year – the equivalent of opening up two new health centers.



In this issue

- Message from the Director
- High Desert MACC Construction begins
- DHS Boosts Primary Care Slots
- Harbor-UCLA Opens Simulation Center
- Dr. William Koenig Honored by EMS Peers
- Clinic Administrators leave Titles at the Door

HARBOR-UCLA OPENS SIMULATION CENTER

Contributed by Dr. Tom Kallay



Striving to foster the education of all healthcare professionals and staff on the Harbor UCLA campus with the use of state-of-the-art medical simulation equipment and techniques, an Open House was held on January 25 to unveil and demonstrate the exciting and innovative Simulation and Skills Center.

The mission of the Center is to promote patient safety and clinical outcomes by integrating simulation technology into the current educational curriculum for all healthcare practitioners and students.

While it should not supplant real patient experience, the simulation experience at the Center can replicate most hospital bedside scenarios, much like preparations made by airline pilots in preparation for flight training," said Center director Dr. Tom Kallay. "Why should our patients serve as a training ground for a person performing their first spinal tap, for example, when there are models to practice on beforehand?"

Being familiar with the tools and the process will increase their chances of success on a real patient, and hopefully will decrease the risk of complications." The Center unofficially opened in March of 2011 with the support of hospital administration, and over the last few months has developed educational offerings such as training for hospital scenarios or procedural skills. To date, the Center has involved 12 departments on the Harbor-UCLA campus in simulation programs, and that number is growing rapidly.

Current efforts are underway to obtain grant funding and assist in advancing the field of simulation-based medical education by contributing to the published field of research. In the future, the Center will open its doors to community providers, to serve as a local resource for simulation-based medical training.

Dr. William Koenig Honored by EMS Peers

Contributed by Michael Wilson

The EMS Agency's Dr. William Koenig was recognized as "EMS Medical Director of the Year" for his contributions in EMS research, program development, advanced CPR, and end-of-life-care at the annual statewide EMS Awards held December 7. Koenig joined an exemplary roster of EMS providers across California honored for acts of bravery and community service. "We are exceedingly fortunate to have Dr. Koenig in our County of Los Angeles," said EMS Director Cathy Chidester. "Bill's leadership in the EMS system as past chair of the State Commission on EMS and as president of the Emergency Medical Directors Association of California speaks to his tireless commitment to improving prehospital emergency care that all residents may need at some point in life."

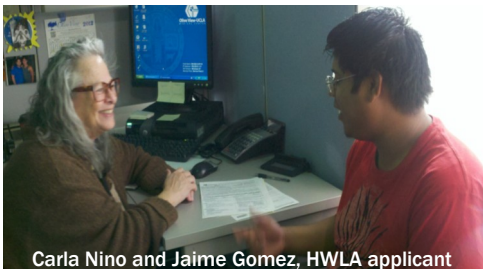
The 2011 awards were presented by Dr. Howard Backer, Director of the EMS Authority, and EMS Commission Chair Colleen Kuhn in categories including clinical excellence, meritorious achievement, and distinguished service. A review committee of the California Ambulance Association, the California Fire Chief's Association, the Emergency Medical Directors Association of California, the Emergency Medical Services Administrators' Association of California determined this year's awardees from the list of nominations. The EMS Awards Program was established by the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMS Authority) to honor those persons who have performed noteworthy, exceptional, and even extraordinary acts "above the call of duty" while working as EMS certified or licensed personnel, administrators, trainers, or volunteers within the EMS system.



Dr. Howard Backer (left) and Colleen Kuhn present award to Dr. Koenig

Clinic Administrators Leave Titles at the Door

Contributed by Michael Wilson



Carla Nino and Jaime Gomez, HWLA applicant

On most days Mid-Valley Comprehensive Health Center administrator Carla Niño is focused on reducing cycle time at the Mid-Valley, San Fernando, Glendale and Vaughn clinics she oversees. A veteran administrator, Niño has recently taken on a new responsibility: for four hours each week, she helps low-income patients complete a checklist to see if they meet eligibility for Healthy Way L.A. coverage.

Niño sees it as a chance to make a small connection with a patient as the department transitions to primary care medical homes for 400,000 patients. Spending a few minutes helping these patients can save them the hassle of going through an interview to find out they aren't eligible. "We are very conscious of budget limitations and the need to limit overtime," says Niño. "My secretary pulls medical charts, my nursing supervisors take vitals, and my clerical supervisors make patient appointments.

There's no room for elitism in public health care." Ambulatory Care Network (ACN) administrators are now all doing front-line work at least a half a day a week by answering phones, working in medical records, and staffing the appointment desk. ACN chief medical officer Dr. Nina Park says the shift has motivated employees and allowed administrators to better understand what patients need." High Desert Multiservice Ambulatory Care Center administrator Beryl Brooks works a few hours each week in medical records after a medical transcriber passed away. "Everyone is filling in and doing her work," says Brooks. "It helps us as leaders get closer to the day-to-day operations and see what the struggles of staff are."

The administrators have a good role model. DHS director Dr. Mitchell Katz finds time running a \$3.5 billion agency and managing one of the most complex health care systems in the nation to treat patients. Maintaining clinical skills and not losing focus on the primacy of the patient is fundamental to his philosophy. And by all accounts, it's taking root. "Everybody is pulling more weight now as we work to expand access and improve customer service and patient experience," says ACN chief executive officer Dr. Alexander Li. "We are absolutely committed to these goals."

Royalbal Comprehensive Health Center administrator Harry Furuya answers phones each week and says the work sends an important message to employees. "All of us are short-handed and because of that we're spreading out beyond borders and working in different roles and going beyond departments," he says. "The emphasis is to stretch ourselves in new directions and show by example that leadership is pitching in." For patients trying to navigate a complex and often bewildering health system, climbing into the trenches and feeling the patient's "experience of care" is essential to building a health system that mirrors their needs.